REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 13, 14 and 19-22 remain in the application and under consideration. Elected independent claim 13 has been amended slightly to define the invention more clearly. Elected dependent claim 14 remains in the application and has not been amended. New claims 19-22 have been added and correspond to the elected invention. Non-elected claims 1-12 remain in the application but are identified as being withdrawn. Non-elected claims 15-18 are canceled without prejudice to avoid extra government fees that would otherwise have been required in view of new claims 19-22. The applicant is considering one or more divisional applications directed to the non-elected subject matter.

The Examiner objected to the original title of the invention as being insufficiently descriptive in view of the election. The Examiner proposed an alternate title.

The title of the invention has been amended in view of the helpful suggestion of the Examiner.

The Examiner objected to the Abstract as being inaccurate in view of the election of method claims.

The original Abstract has been deleted in favor of a new Abstract.

Claims 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,743,002 to Ito et al. The Examiner identified elements of the Ito et al. reference that were considered to correspond to the original claims.

Alternatively, claims 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Ito et al. considered in view of the admitted prior art. The Examiner acknowledged that the Ito et al. reference does not teach the use of compressed air.

However, the Examiner noted that the admitted prior art discusses the use of compressed air for feeding a seal into the fitting position. The Examiner concluded that it would be obvious to combine the admitted prior art with Ito et al.

The Examiner will appreciate that the Ito et al. reference is assigned to the assignee of the subject invention. As a result, the assignee is very familiar with the teaching of their earlier Ito et al. reference. FIG. 3 of the Ito et al. reference is believed to be most relevant to the issues presented in the office action. In this regard, FIG. 3 of Ito et al. shows a feeding path 5 that has a plurality of the rubber plugs 3 aligned so that the axis of each rubber plug 3 extends substantially normal to the plane of the paper in FIG. 3. The Ito et al. reference then has a transferrer 8 that includes a rod 11. The rod 11 is inserted into the wire insertion hole 3(c) of one of the rubber plugs 3. The rod 11 then is rotated between a receiving position 6 and a mounting position 7. As a result, the rod 11 of the transferrer 8 must rotate the respective rubber plug 3 through a 90° rotation each time a rubber plug 3 is fed from the feeding path 5 to the holder 12. The Examiner will appreciate that this need to rotate each plug 90° is extremely inefficient.

In contrast to the assignee's earlier Ito et al. patent, the subject invention relates to a method including a seal cavity defining step of defining a seal cavity for receiving a cylindrical waterproof seal member at a predetermined fitting position and "on an axis line of an electric wire." The method proceeds with a feeding step of "feeding the seal member by compressed air along the axis line and into the seal cavity at the fitting position with such a posture as to receive the electric wire." The method then includes a locking step and follows with an inserting step of "inserting the electric wire into the seal member along the axis line while the seal member is in the locked state. Thus, the

claimed method moves the seal along the axis line into the seal cavity and subsequently moves the wire along the axis line in the opposed direction. The claimed method does not require the time consuming and inefficient step of Ito et al. where the seal enters the cavity by being rotated through 90°. The Ito et al. reference would have to be redesigned completely to be brought closer to the invention defined by amended claim 13, and no such redesign is suggested in Ito et al. Furthermore, the admitted prior art does not overcome this deficiency of Ito et al.

New independent claim 21 also defines the feeding step of feeding the seal member into the seal cavity along the axis line and then an inserting step of inserting the electric wire into the seal member in the locked state and along the access line. For the reasons stated above, it is believed that new independent claim 21 is patentable over Ito et al. or the hypothetical combination of Ito et al. and the admitted prior art. New dependent claim 20 and new dependent claim 22 both define the locking step with greater particularity. These claims certainly are not taught or suggested by the prior art of record. New dependent claim 19 defines the direction of movement of the seal and the wire along the axis line. These method steps also are not suggested by the prior art.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the claims remaining in the application are directed to patentable subject matter and allowance is solicited. The Examiner is urged to contact applicants attorney at the number below to

expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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